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SUBJECT: THE DISILLUSIONED MINDEF DULIME

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission David C. Litt for reasons  
1.4 (a), (b), and (d)

¶1. (C//REL GBR AUS) SUMMARY. In a March 19 meeting with Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) Lieutenant General Dempsey and Acting PolMilCouns, Iraqi Minister of Defense Sadoun Al-Dulime, accompanied by Iraqi Commanding General Babakir Zibari, discussed his disillusionment with the current state of Iraq. He described the political party leaders as self-interested individuals whose use of ethno-sectarian platforms are increasingly dividing the nation. When asked what the obstacles are to improving security, Dulime listed three problems that must be overcome. He stressed the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) must gain the confidence of the Iraqi people, the Iraqi Facility Protection Services (FPS) and private security details must be better regulated, and militias must be dealt with now and with firm resolve. He stressed that, of the militias, the Sadrism-backed Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) is causing the most concern and presents the biggest threat to Iraq. Neither Dulime nor Babakir believes that enforcing the weapons ban in Baghdad would improve the situation. JAM and others would simply ignore it, drawing the Iraqi government into direct confrontation. END SUMMARY.

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Blame Goes to the Politicos  
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¶2. (C//REL GBR AUS) Dulime is frustrated with the political party leaders in charge of forming a unity government. He blames them for the current state of high tension. He complains these politicians are not nationalists but rather Sunni and Shia extremists pursuing "personal interests and agendas." If moderates do not come to the forefront, Dulime believes the nation is doomed to more chaos.

¶3. (C//REL GBR AUS) Dulime complained this extremist mentality is increasingly seeping into the Iraqi populace. He spoke of the growing number of Sunni tribal leaders and citizens who come to his office asking him to employ the military specifically for the Sunni people. When he explains that his forces are to protect all Iraqis, they respond the Shia do not need defense, as they all have their own militias. Despite his dismay, Dulime assured Dempsey he would continue to encourage unity with those he meets. He also mentioned that he will be holding a security conference next week for both Shia and Sunni tribal leaders as a way to bridge differences.

¶4. (C//REL GBR AUS) Coalition advisors to Dulime have reported to us in separate meetings of his frustration with the increasing number of visits by Sunnis complaining about "the Shia". As an example, the advisor described a recent meeting with Sunni National Dialogue leader Adnan Dulaimi, in

which Dulaimi essentially told MinDef that the Sunnis should band together and fight the Shia. Dulaimi explained that the regional Sunni population is much larger than the Shia, and Sunnis would be eager to unite and defeat the Shia. According to the advisor, after Dulaimi's departure MinDef was furious and completely shocked at the intensity of the ethno-sectarian division. MinDef explained how ludicrous people are getting and how this is not like Iraqis, who for centuries have married across religious, sectarian, and ethnic lines. He himself is married to a Shia.

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Top Three Obstacles to Achieving Security  
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15. (C//REL BRG AUS) According to Dulime, the ISF face three obstacles to establishing a secure Iraq. The first problem is the lack of trust in the ISF by the Iraqi public. He opined that, given Iraqi history, the current ethno-sectarian divisions, and the levels of competency among the ISF, it will be difficult to win the confidence of the Iraqi people. He and Dempsey concurred that the training and equipping program must continue without delay and that focusing on recruiting Iraqis of all backgrounds remains critical.

16. (C//REL GBR AUS) The second problem is the unregulated Facility Protection Services (FPS). These poorly trained "police" forces assigned to, and controlled by, individual ministries number over 150,000 personnel, which Dulime pointed out means they outnumber Iraqi Army forces. They wear uniforms that closely resemble Iraqi police uniforms and are equipped with vehicles that look like police cars. Dulime asserted that many of these forces are loyal only to their own ministers and are committing violent and illegal attacks that are then attributed to the ISF. He said that immediate steps must be taken to bring them under control.

17. (C//REL GBR AUS) Contributing to this problem are the unregulated personal security details. This flourishing business also puts thousands of poorly regulated and controlled armed individuals on the streets. At this time, there is no one central authority for management, regulation, and certification. Because of this, according to Dulime, these forces are running amok. He complained that many in this business abuse their positions by intimidating and using violence against the public. He complained that they are loyal only to their employers and will do their bidding without regard to the law.

18. (C//REL GBR AUS) The militias are the third barrier to advancing security. Dulime stressed that outlawing and enforcing the ban on militias are necessary. He and Babakir agreed that JAM was the biggest problem and the main militia threat to society. Babakir piped up at one point and said just give him the word and he would direct the army to go into Sadr city and wipe JAM out. Dulime and Dempsey cautioned against such action. Dempsey asked whether it would be a good step to have the Prime Minister make a public announcement reminding Iraqis of the weapons control measures and stressing ISF would be cracking down, especially in Baghdad. Dulime and Babakir responded that such a move would not be useful, and in fact it would be counterproductive. They surmised the announcement would be ignored, forcing the ISF into direct confrontation with JAM and other militias. Dulime made clear that he would not allow Iraqi Army weapons to be turned on Iraqis unless they were terrorists.

19. (C//REL GBR AUS) COMMENT. Dulime is not a major player in the political scene. He considers himself an independent with no ties to political parties or alliances. Despite his frustration with the current government situation, we understand he is still very interested in remaining MinDef once the new government is formed. However, the chance of this happening is slim, because, by playing it straight and by participating in a Shia-dominated government at a time when most Sunnis were boycotting it, he has alienated himself from the Sunni political mainstream which largely considers him a traitor to the Sunni cause. His knowledge of this

alienation and of his poor prospects for remaining in office  
must also color his attitude and remarks to us.  
KHALILZAD